



Annual Vendor Training Newsletter

Annual Training for Federal Fiscal Year 2024

The Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc. (ITCA) WIC Program thanks you for your partnership in providing nutritious foods for WIC families in your community!

This newsletter serves as the required ITCA WIC annual vendor training for federal fiscal year 2024 (October 1, 2023 – September 30, 2024). Annual training keeps store management and staff informed about ITCA WIC vendor policies and procedures.



You will find ACTION ITEMS throughout this newsletter. Complete the ACTION ITEMS to ensure your store is in compliance with program rules.

TRAIN THE TRAINER

Store managers are responsible for providing this Training Newsletter to all store employees involved with stocking WIC foods and conducting WIC transactions. Ensure store employees are provided with the contents of this Newsletter. The vendor business entity is accountable for its owners, officers, managers, agents, and employees who commit vendor violations.

ACTION ITEM

Give a copy of this Training Newsletter to staff involved in WIC transaction procedures and stocking WIC foods or place Newsletters in an area where all staff can access a copy.

TRAINING CONTENTS

This newsletter and the enclosed handouts contain important information for vendors, including:

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What Is WIC?

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is a powerful public health nutrition program administered by USDA. WIC provides nutritious foods, breastfeeding support, nutrition education, and referrals to healthcare and other community services. WIC has been shown to improve health outcomes and diet quality during critical life stages. WIC serves low to moderate income people who are pregnant or have recently given birth, infants, and children up to age five.



Authorized Foods and the Approved Product List

AUTHORIZED PRODUCT LIST (APL)

The Approved Product List (APL) is an electronic file containing the UPCs and PLUs of WIC approved products. The Point of Sale (POS) system uses the APL during a WIC transaction to ensure only WIC eligible products are purchased with WIC benefits. **The APL file plays a vital role in the WIC transaction process. POS systems must download the ITCA WIC APL every 24 hours, or every day the vendor is open for business.** If your POS system doesn't download on a regular basis, ITCA may not be able to reimburse you for certain WIC products.

FOOD LIST

The Food List contains the images, brands, types, and sizes of WIC Approved foods that may be purchased with WIC benefits. You should be familiar with WIC foods but do not need to memorize them, because they automatically ring up as WIC approved at the register. **The Food List and ITCA WIC APL can be found on our website: itcaonline.com/itca-wic-authorized-foods.**



FOOD LIST

Effective October 1, 2023



If you would like hard copies of the Food List they can be requested at WICVendor@itcaonline.com.

NEW FOOD LIST!

EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 1, 2023

The Food List has been expanded to allow additional foods to be purchased with WIC benefits beginning on October 1, 2023.

See pages 4 and 5 for a list of the significant food list changes

Ensure your POS system downloads the APL regularly so WIC clients can purchase the new foods in the upcoming Food List.



WIC SHOPPER APP FOR WIC CLIENTS AND VENDORS

The WIC Shopper App is a free app that allows ITCA WIC clients to check their balance in real time and scan foods to determine if they are WIC eligible and in their WIC benefit balance. Anyone, including store staff, can use the WIC Shopper app to scan and identify WIC allowable foods.

If there are foods suspected to be WIC allowable but aren't ringing up as WIC, you or the customer can use the "I couldn't buy this" icon in the app to submit items to us for approval. This happens with some fresh fruits and vegetables that are new to the market, seasonal, and/or supplied by a different farmer or crop. These fruits and vegetables may not be identified as WIC allowable yet and need to be reported to ITCA WIC.

WIC Shopper app tutorials can be found on the ITCA website at: itcaonline.com/programs/wic-program/ewicinfo



Scan the QR code to learn more, or download the WIC Shopper app through your app store.

Vendor Manual

The ITCA WIC Vendor Manual includes the policies and procedures that apply to authorized vendors. **Authorized vendors must know how to access the vendor manual.** You may have a copy of the ITCA WIC Vendor Manual on a flash drive provided during store authorization, or you may have access to it through your store's internal site. Additionally, you can access the Vendor Manual on the ITCA website.



ACTION ITEM

Access the ITCA WIC Vendor Manual

Approved Infant Formula Suppliers

Vendors must only purchase formula from sources that are approved by ITCA WIC. The list of approved infant formula wholesalers, distributors, retailers, and infant formula manufacturers is enclosed.

Minimum Stocking Requirements

Vendors are required to carry a minimum quantity and variety of WIC foods. See the enclosed Minimum Stocking Requirements for a list of quantities and varieties of WIC foods that must be maintained at all times. Failure to maintain the minimum stocking requirements results in administrative sanction. Repeated failure may result in termination of the Vendor Agreement.

ACTION ITEM

Walk the aisles with the enclosed **Minimum Stocking Requirements** documents to verify the store meets the minimum quantity and variety of WIC foods required.

HAVING TROUBLE SELLING WIC FOODS?

You may be eligible for a reduction in the types and quantities of WIC foods required to be maintained in inventory. Contact ITCA WIC to learn more.



WIC SIGNAGE

WE ACCEPT ITCA WIC WINDOW DECAL

Authorized vendors are required to display the We Accept ITCA eWIC window decal at entrances where they can be clearly seen by the public. The window decal helps ITCA WIC clients find an authorized store location to buy their WIC foods.



ACTION ITEMS

Check the entrances of your store to verify the We Accept ITCA eWIC window decal is present and visible to the public.

If needed, ITCA WIC window decals can be requested at WICVendor@itcaonline.com.

Every WIC Program has a different decal. If your store accepts WIC from multiple WIC programs, post the decal for each program.

WIC APPROVED SHELF LABELS



WIC Approved shelf labels help WIC customers identify WIC authorized foods in your store. If a vendor chooses to use the WIC Approved shelf labels, all WIC eligible food items in the same food category must have the WIC Approved label, to avoid promoting some products over others.

EXAMPLE: If you place a WIC Approved shelf label on Langers 64 oz. shelf stable apple juice, you must use the WIC Approved shelf labels to identify all other 64 oz. shelf stable WIC approved juices.

ACTION ITEM

Walk through the aisles and check for WIC Approved shelf labels. If they are present, ensure all the WIC eligible products in the food category have the shelf label.

If needed, ITCA WIC Approved shelf labels can be requested at WICVendor@itcaonline.com.

New Foods!

Unless otherwise noted, all foods in the previous food list are still allowable. For a full list of all foods listed in the new Food List, ask ITCA.

MILK New additions!

Organic Milk

ADDED

- Organic milk in the gallon size only



Kefir *New!*

ADDED

- Lifeway Kefir 32 oz. containers, any flavor in all milk fat varieties



EGGS Added more options!

ADDED

- Organic, free range, and cage free



CHEESE 8 oz. block and sliced cheese now allowable

ADDED

- 8 oz. packages block and sliced cheese



YOGURT Now available in single serving cups and 24 oz. containers!

Nonfat and Low-Fat Yogurt - *Added brands, sizes and organic options*

ADDED PRODUCTS
24 OZ. – 32 OZ. CONTAINER

- Dannon Oikos Pro
- Good & Gather
- LaLa
- O Organics
- Simple Truth Organic
- Stonyfield Organic

ADDED PRODUCTS
5.3 OZ. – 6 OZ. INDIVIDUAL CUPS
OR 4 PACKS

- Food Club
- Great Value
- Kroger
- Lucerne
- O Organics
- Open Nature
- Tillamook Good and Creamy
- WinCo
- Yoplait Original

ADDED PRODUCTS
5.3 OZ. INDIVIDUAL CUPS AND
4-PACKS

- Chobani Zero Sugar
- Dannon Light and Fit Greek
- Dannon Light and Fit Original
- Dannon Oikos Blended
- Dannon Oikos Pro
- Dannon Oikos Triple Zero



ADDED

- Stonyfield Organic Kids
2 oz. – 8 packs
- Stonyfield Organic Kids
4 oz. – 6 packs

Whole Milk Yogurt - *Added brands, sizes and organic options*

ADDED PRODUCTS
24 OZ. – 32 OZ. CONTAINER

- Good & Gather
- Great Value
- O Organics
- Simple Truth Organic
- Stonyfield Organic

ADDED PRODUCTS
5.3 OZ. – 6 OZ. INDIVIDUAL CUPS
OR 4 PACKS

- Dannon Oikos Traditional
- Food Club
- WinCo

ADDED PRODUCTS

- Noosa 8 oz. – 4 packs
- Stonyfield Organic Kids
4 oz. - 6 packs
- Yoplait Oui - 5 oz.
individual containers



CEREAL New! 9 oz. is now the smallest allowable size for cold and hot cereal.

Cold Cereal

THE FOLLOWING CEREALS ARE NOW ALLOWABLE

- Great Value toasted oats
- Cheerios with strawberries
- Chex cinnamon
- Crispix
- Fiber One honey clusters
- Malt-O-Meal mini spoovers strawberries and cream
- Frosted Mini Wheats little bites blueberry, chocolate, cinnamon roll, and strawberry
- Great Grains crunchy pecan
- Honey Bunches of Oats cinnamon bunches, maple and pecans, and vanilla
- Kashi Hearts & O's honey toasted and warm cinnamon
- Special K Protein touch of cinnamon
- Wheaties



Hot Cereal

THE FOLLOWING CEREALS ARE NOW ALLOWABLE

- Food Club Instant Grits original and instant oatmeal original in individual packets
- Great Value instant oatmeal original in individual packets
- Essential Everyday instant oatmeal original individual packets
- Kroger instant oatmeal original individual packets
- Signature Select instant oatmeal original individual packets
- Malt-O-Meal original, chocolate, and coco wheat
- Quaker instant grits original and butter



FRUITS AND VEGETABLES New items allowed!

Canned Fruits and Vegetables *Now Allowed!*

ADDED

- Canned fruit
- Canned vegetables



Fresh Vegetables *Herbs now allowed!*

ADDED

- Bay leaves, basil, cilantro, chives, dill, ginger, mint, oregano, parsley, rosemary, sage, thyme



FISH Added flavors and pouches

ADDED

- Chunk light tuna and pink salmon, can now be flavored and is allowed to be in a pouch



WHOLE GRAINS New Bread! Plus new sizes!

Whole Grain Bread

ADDED BRANDS

- Orowheat 100% whole wheat hot dog buns, whole wheat hamburger buns, whole wheat sandwich thins, and Orowheat multigrain sandwich thins



Barley *New!*

ADDED

- Any brand of barley (instant, quick, boil-in-bag, or regular cooking) up to 16 oz. size is now allowable



INFANT FOODS Added stage, size, and brand

Infant Fruits and Vegetables

ADDED

- Stage 1
- 2 oz. size container
- Simple Truth Organic brand



WIC Transaction Procedures

Treat WIC customers the same as other customers. At stores that use an integrated POS system, WIC customers can purchase WIC foods and non-WIC foods together. At checkout, scan the UPC, or enter the PLU attached to the product. The WIC customer will slide their eWIC card and enter their PIN. The POS system will print a mid-transaction/ benefit utilization receipt. This receipt shows the scanned foods that are:

- **WIC Eligible/in the APL AND in the WIC Benefits**

Provide the mid-transaction / benefit utilization receipt to the WIC customer so they can see which foods will be covered by WIC. Upon transaction approval, the WIC payment is ONLY applied to the foods that are in the WIC benefits AND in the APL. Any products that do not meet both of these criteria, cause a balance to be due. A balance can be paid with another form of payment or can be removed from the transaction at the request of the WIC customer. Provide the purchase receipt to the WIC customer upon completion of the transaction.

If a cashier needs assistance with a WIC transaction, please remember to keep WIC customer information private and use discretion. Publicly identifying a person as a WIC customer is not allowed.

REMINDER: *ITCA WIC customers may use self-check-out lanes at authorized Albertson's, Fry's Food & Drug, Walmart, and WinCo Foods store locations.

WIC BALANCE INQUIRY

A printed balance inquiry is a list of the quantity and variety of WIC foods and/or formula the WIC customer can purchase with their eWIC card. If asked, you must conduct a WIC balance inquiry and provide the printed balance to the WIC customer. WIC customers are not required to make a purchase to retrieve their benefit balance.

ACTION ITEM

Ensure you, and other store staff, know how to conduct a WIC balance inquiry.



THE DO'S AND DON'TS

DO:

- ✓ Treat WIC customers with the same courtesies as other customers
- ✓ Scan each item using the UPC attached to the item
- ✓ Allow the use of coupons, purchase of items on sale and promotional specials
- ✓ Provide the mid-transaction/ benefit utilization receipt to WIC customer before purchase approval
- ✓ Allow the WIC customer to pay for remaining groceries with a different form of payment
- ✓ Give the WIC customer a purchase receipt

DON'T:

- ✗ Do not scan UPC's that are not attached to a food item
- ✗ Do not restrict or limit the quantity of WIC benefits that can be utilized
- ✗ Do not provide cash refunds
- ✗ Do not allow exchanges (unless item is spoiled or recalled)

CHANGE OF OWNERSHIP AND/OR LOCATION

The Vendor Agreement is non-transferrable and terminated upon a change in location or change of ownership. Re-located stores and new owners must go through the authorization process to become authorized to accept ITCA WIC benefits. Any amount reimbursed to the vendor after a change in location or ownership will be recovered by ITCA.

To report changes, the Notice of Change form in the Vendor Manual can be used. The Vendor Manual can be found at www.itcaonline.com/wic/vendor.

Vendor Agreement Expiration and Authorization for Next Contract Cycle

The current Vendor Agreement expires on September 30, 2024, for all vendors. All vendors must re-submit an application and attend vendor authorization training to remain authorized in the next Vendor Agreement period, which starts October 1, 2024, and ends on September 30, 2027. More details will be provided in the spring of 2024.

Claims Procedure

When a vendor overcharges for WIC products, intentionally or unintentionally, ITCA may establish a monetary claim to recover those funds. ITCA may recover the amount reimbursed to the vendor for all products in the transaction or only recover the dollar amount overpaid to the vendor. Vendors are given an opportunity to justify or correct an overcharge or other error, and must pay any monetary claim imposed by ITCA. In collecting a claim, ITCA may require payment from the vendor or adjust the transactions containing an overcharge through the third party processor. In addition to establishing a monetary claim, the vendor may be sanctioned for overcharging. Sanctions may include termination, disqualification, administrative fines, civil money penalties in lieu of disqualification, or any combination of sanctions.

Incentive Items

An incentive item is any item or service provided to attract customers or encourage loyalty. Vendors may offer incentive items to WIC customers, ONLY if they are also offered to all customers. WIC customers must be treated the same as other customers and can't be denied incentive items when offered to other customers.

Reporting Changes

Authorized vendors must provide ITCA at least 30 days advance notice for changes related to:

- Banking management
- Cash register hardware
- Cash register software
- Software version updates
- Third party processor
- Hours of operation
- Mailing address

Failure to report a change of banking information, cash register information, or third party processor, will result in the ITCA WIC Program losing the ability to reimburse a vendor for WIC purchases.



HOW TO SUBMIT COMPLAINTS AND REPORT FRAUD

COMPLAINTS ABOUT WIC CUSTOMERS

If you experience an issue or concern with a WIC customer, let us know about it. Individuals who submit a complaint about a WIC customer remain anonymous. We follow up with the WIC client as needed to address the issue. Resolutions include: providing the WIC client additional shopping education, reminding WIC clients of their rights and responsibilities, and possibly disqualifying or terminating the WIC client from the ITCA WIC program. Complaints and concerns can be submitted to ITCA the following ways:

Email: WICVendor@itcaonline.com

Online: itcaonline.com/complaint *select File a Complaint*

Phone: 602.258.4822

COMPLAINTS ABOUT VENDORS

WIC clients can submit complaints about vendors to their WIC clinic. ITCA WIC follows up with vendors and WIC clients as necessary to resolve the complaint. Resolutions include: change of store staff behavior, increasing inventory of WIC foods, re-training of store staff, imposition of monetary fines, vendor disqualification, imposition of a civil money penalty instead of disqualification, or termination from the ITCA WIC program.

PROGRAM INTEGRITY

Protect the integrity of the WIC Program by reporting fraud. Buying, selling, or otherwise misusing WIC benefits is a crime. Report suspected program abuse to the ITCA WIC Program Vendor Manager, call 602.258.4822 or visit usda.gov/oig/hotline.

STORE REVIEWS

To ensure all WIC vendors follow the program rules and regulations, as outlined in the Vendor Manual, ITCA monitors vendors through:

- Vendor Site Reviews
- Customer Complaint Reporting
- Transaction Receipt Review
- Inventory Audits
- Compliance Investigations
- Review of WIC Redemption Activity

Sanction System

Sanctions are issued to authorized WIC vendors that violate the ITCA WIC Program requirements, which include federal regulations, the Vendor Agreement, the Vendor Manual, and ITCA WIC Program policies and procedures. Sanctions include termination, disqualification, civil money penalties, administrative fines, monetary claims, or a combination of sanctions. Federal regulations require ITCA to sanction vendors regardless of whether the violations were intentional or unintentional. The Sanction Schedule does not encompass all Vendor Agreement terms and potential violations.

ACTION ITEM

See the enclosed Sanction Schedule for a list of violations and their corresponding sanctions.

Technical Assistance

Technical assistance is available for vendors who need support with WIC related problems and efforts to improve the WIC shopping process. Some examples of technical assistance include:

- Working together to develop in-store training materials
- Identifying WIC eligible products
- Addressing concerns about WIC rules and procedures
- Providing additional training
- Collaborating to make it easier for customers to identify WIC foods
- Efforts to improve the WIC shopping process
- Providing WIC redemption data to guide the quantity of WIC foods needed to meet the demand at your store

Contact ITCA WIC to request technical assistance, (602) 258-4822 or WICVendor@itcaonline.com.



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Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. Mail: **U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410**; or
2. Fax: **(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442**; or
3. Email: **program.intake@usda.gov**

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